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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 TOKYO 001344

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: CHINESE PRESIDENT HU'S JAPAN VISIT SIGNALS EFFORTS  
TO STRENGTHEN TIES

REF: A. TOKYO 001138  
[1](#)B. TOKYO 01267

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Classified By: Charge d' Affaires Joseph R. Donovan for reasons 1.4 (b)  
and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Both MOFA and the PRC Embassy in Tokyo told Embassy Tokyo Prime Minister Fukuda's summit meeting with President Hu Jintao was a success and important step forward in advancing bilateral ties. Both sides regarded the Fukuda-Hu summit, fourth joint communique, and joint press statement, as historic accomplishments. The visit signaled Tokyo and Beijing's commitment to advancing bilateral ties while leaders continue to work quietly behind the scenes to resolve ongoing disputes. While both MOFA and the PRC Embassy said the visit was a success, they gave different reasons why, and Embassy Tokyo noted slightly different views from the Japanese and Chinese on the interpretation of the joint communique text (UNSC) and on prospects for progress on the East China Sea. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Japan considers President Hu's May 6-10 visit to Japan and summit meeting with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda a success MOFA China and Mongolia Division Director Akiba told Embassy Tokyo on May 12. It is an accomplishment that the visit was even held at all, he added. When faced with increased tensions over food safety caused by the gyoza poisoning, coupled with the human rights situation in Tibet, MOFA officials, even privately, never considered canceling the visit, Akiba stated. "I attended Fukuda's summit meeting with Hu and noted both Fukuda and Hu had a very positive attitude and the atmosphere was warm," Akiba noted. Hu displayed a willingness to take a risk by coming to Japan when bilateral relations are under increased public scrutiny so the visit, in and of itself, was a success that Japan considers "historic and exceptional," he added.

[1](#)3. (C) Prime Minister Fukuda's personal efforts to improve relations with China is one of the reasons Hu's visit to Japan was able to take place, and was one of the factors that made the visit so successful, PRC Embassy Political Officer Chen Zhiwen told Embassy Tokyo on May 12. When compared with former Prime Minister Koizumi and former Prime Minister Abe, Chinese leaders, and the public, like Prime Minister Fukuda. Abe reluctantly tried to repair damage to relations caused by China whereas Fukuda truly values Japan's ties with China. Fukuda likes China and strived to not only repair and restore relations with Beijing, but improve and strengthen them, Chen

noted. Abe broke the ice on thawing bilateral ties, but the relationship is "getting warmer and warmer thanks to Fukuda's efforts," she said.

#### Negotiating the Joint Communiqué

14. (C) Signing a fourth joint communiqué with Beijing and releasing a joint press statement are two additional "deliverables" that contributed to a successful visit. The joint communiqué is "objective, rational, and not so emotional," Akiba relayed. Negotiations on the text of the document continued until twelve hours before Hu met with Fukuda. The negotiations were tense, not because Japan and China had big differences of opinion, but because each side needed to choose their words carefully, which is one reason some of the text could be viewed as ambiguous, he explained. For example, China "always tries to use the phrase "strategic mutual trust" when referring to Japan-China ties. However, this does not translate well into Japanese but Hu insisted on using this language when speaking with the press anyway. Japan prefers using the phrase "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests" which is the phrase used in the official title of the fourth joint communiqué. This phrase was coined during former Prime Minister Abe's October 2006 visit to China.

15. (C) A reference to historical issues was "limited to a minimum in both documents, Akiba stressed." It is important to note what was not said on history. In other words, China's flexibility and willingness to keep references to differences over history to a minimum signals Beijing is willing to strengthen and improve ties with Japan even though unresolved differences remain, he added. Tension over history issues has not been resolved, and could become

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problematic in the future, but it is unlikely that Beijing will "allow" the anti-Japanese riots that occurred several years ago from happening again, he assessed.

16. (C) It is noteworthy that references to "historical issues" were kept to a minimum, agreed Chen. History issues are no longer the focal point in the relationship, but it is too early to say that history issues have been resolved, and too early to say that anti-Japan riots in China will not happen again, she stated.

17. (C) Both Chen and Akiba agreed negotiations on the text on Taiwan and on Japan's bid for a permanent UNSC seat were among the most contentious and time consuming. In section four, sub-paragraph 5 of the joint statement, Japan and China refer to Japan's "position and role" in the United Nations. Japanese and Chinese were used as the official languages for the joint documents and MOFA said an official English translation will not be produced. Both Japan and China have subtle but important differences in the meaning of the text and how it should be accurately translated.

18. (C) MOFA provisional English translation states that "The Chinese side attaches importance to Japan's position and role in the United Nations and desires Japan to play an even greater constructive role in the international community." Akiba stated this text is very significant because it is "new" and is the first time China has expressed "in writing" support for Japan's goal of obtaining a permanent UNSC seat. Premier Wen first verbally expressed support for Japan to have an expanded UN role, but this is the first time it is in writing, Akiba emphasized. The text might not "mean much" at first glance but it is significant, Akiba noted.

19. (C) Chen told Embassy Tokyo the MOFA English translation contains errors. Chen stated, that it is misleading and inaccurate to say that China "desires and hopes" for Japan to play an even greater role in the international community. Rather, China is "willing to see" Japan play an even greater role in "world affairs." Chen noted that the Chinese text is

most accurately translated into English as "world affairs" in contrast to "international community. (Comment: While the differences in translation are subtle, they illustrate the perception gaps continue to exist in how MOFA assesses China views Japan. Since there will not be an official translation into English, the ambiguity in language allows MOFA to cast this perceived Chinese show of support for Japan's role in the UN and international community as a foreign policy victory to the Japanese public. End Comment.)

¶10. (C) Turning to Taiwan, Akiba said China knows "there are certain things both sides must accept the other country's position on." While Japan did agree to include one sentence on Taiwan in the joint statement, the text does not state anything new, he added. The text in the joint statement states "Regarding the Taiwan issue, the Japanese side again expressed its adherence to the position enunciated in the Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China." Chen noted, somewhat triumphantly, that Beijing did not ask Tokyo to say anything new regarding its position on Taiwan and said Beijing "wanted nothing more than affirmation of the text included in the three previous joint statements."

#### In Search of Progress on East China Sea

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¶11. (C) The lack of substantial progress on the East China Sea was disappointing, agreed Akiba and Chen. Akiba noted that the Japanese press was "inaccurate" and emphasized the media overstated progress on negotiations. Japan and China still need to work out many details before an agreement can be reached, and this may take time to accomplish. Chen, however, was much more optimistic. She predicted that "great progress" will occur at the next round of negotiations, which will likely be held before the G-8 Summit, according to Chen. She shared Akiba's assessment that the disagreement over the demarcation line will not be resolved and success in the near future means an agreement on joint development in a particular area of the East China Sea. (Note: Akiba was much more pessimistic on the prospect of progress on the East China Sea dispute compared to his April 22 assessment reported reftel. End Note.)

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#### Tibet and Human Rights

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¶12. (C) Japan and China agreed to resume dialogue on human rights issues but a date and agenda has not been set for future talks, Akiba stated. Agreeing to resume dialogue on human rights was the easy part, but setting the date for future talks, and agreeing on a mutually acceptable agenda, will be the hard part, Chen noted. Akiba said Japan has requested China be more transparent on Tibet and said Fukuda delivered a "strongly worded message" to Hu on the importance of improving human rights and handling the situation in Tibet without the use of violence, Akiba said. It is notable that China did not react negatively and signals a qualitative change in Japan-China ties. Japan can now state things in an open way, and China in turn, is willing to engage in dialogue. This is an important step forward, Akiba emphasized. Fukuda told Hu if China does not make progress on human rights, it might be difficult for the international community to celebrate the Beijing Olympics. Japan understands China does not like the Olympics to be linked with human rights concerns in Tibet but noted Fukuda "spent a lot of time" discussing this with Hu. Moreover, Beijing kept Japan informed before and after Beijing held talks with the Dalai Lama. For the first time, Japan was informed at the same time the United States was, he added.

#### Boosting Cooperation on Aid

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¶13. (C) Japan proposed boosting cooperation with China on aid to third countries, Akiba stated. While Japan proposed this, and China agreed, both sides realize this could be

difficult to accomplish. Aid officials in China and Japan have already starting working on potential areas of cooperation, and this will continue after TICAD, he noted. Japan still has problems with some of the ways China extends aid to African countries, but by increasing cooperation with China, Tokyo will have more opportunities to voice its opinion on "areas of concern," he explained. Fukuda also raised the situation in Burma with Hu and outlined Japan's concerns on the political situation there. Hu shared Fukuda's concerns for the Burmese people following the devastating cyclone but did not say "anything new" regarding the political situation.

#### Hu's Visit to Kansai

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¶14. (SBU) Hu visited Osaka and Nara before departing for Beijing. He arrived in Osaka on May 9, and amid extremely heavy security, went directly to a downtown hotel for a meeting with Kansai leaders hosted by Osaka Gov. Hashimoto followed by a banquet with 200 top business leaders. The scattered Tibet-related protestors and right wing sound trucks were not seen or heard by Hu's party, according to the Chinese Consular General in Osaka. Hu's meetings with local leaders (including mayors and governors from nearby prefectures and heads of the Kansai business organizations) included televised exchange of pleasantries. Despite a passing reference to the East China Sea gas development dispute, neither Hu nor Hashimoto raised any controversial issues. Similarly, Hu's comments to business leaders at the banquet were described by several participants as "careful and bland." In all meetings Hu repeatedly used the mantra of "strategic mutually-beneficial relations" (senryakuteki gokei kankei) in regard to Sino-Japanese relations. The local officials and business leaders spoke positively about their impression of Hu, both privately to Osaka-Kobe Consular General and publicly in the media. Several described him as "very western" in style, and all said they found him personable and determined to make a good impression.

¶15. (SBU) Both Hu and his hosts made repeated reference to then-Vice PM Deng Xiaoping's visit to Osaka and Nara exactly 30-years earlier. Like Deng, Hu visited Panasonic's Osaka headquarters on May 9 and also met briefly with the company's Chinese employees. Hu visited Nara where he met with the Governor and visited two historic temples founded in the Ninth century by a famous Chinese Buddhist monk. Although a group of Japanese monks held a silent prayer protest nearby in support of Tibetan monks, there were no disruptions and rain and heavy security kept the crowds small and far away.

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Screened groups of Chinese students and residents, however, greeted Hu's arrival at each stop. Hu always made a point of walking over and chatting briefly with them, much as a western politician would, according to a senior Japanese official.

¶16. (C) Bio Note on Hu Jintao: MOFA Ambassador-at-Large Yamazaki briefed Osaka Consulate-General following Hu's visit to Kansai visit and confirmed that Hu's performance had been "smooth". Not only was Hu smiling and personable in public, he was remarkably relaxed throughout. Moreover, Hu's staff seemed at ease and comfortable in the Chinese President's presence - in stark contrast to Yamazaki's experience with a Jiang Zemin visit to Southeast Asia. Yamazaki said the business community was very favorably impressed with Hu and noted he appeared more than willing to set aside political points of contention such as Tibet and the East China Sea dispute. Nearly everyone used words like "careful" or "bland" to describe his comments and "good" to describe his performance.

¶17. (C) Bio Note on Hu Jintao's Wife: Yamazaki said that Mrs. Hu appeared to have some health or at least diet "issues". She had her meals prepared separately through the visit and

did not attend any official meals. Her staff was unsure of whether she would accompany Hu to the temples in Nara until shortly before their departure from Osaka (she went).

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